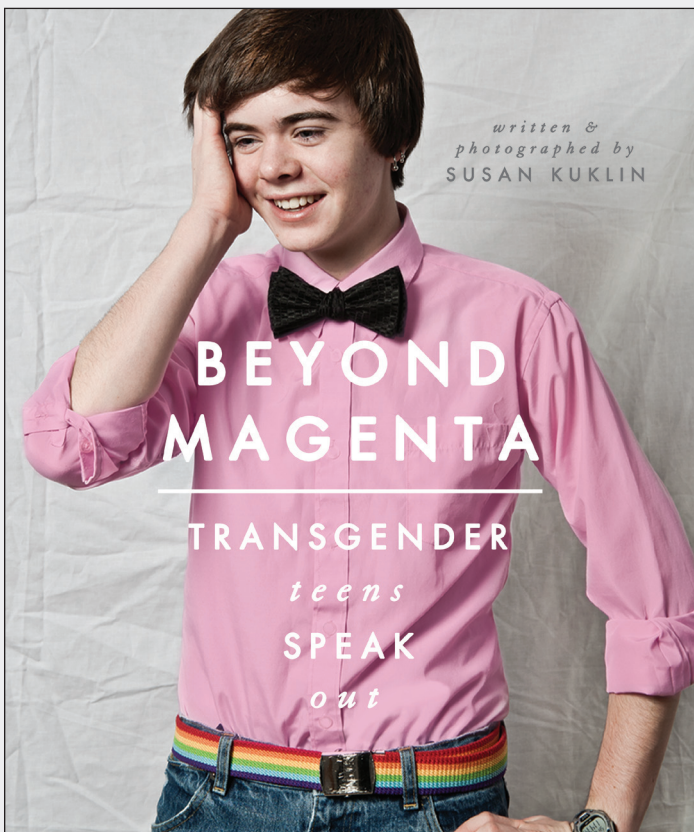


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BEYOND MAGENTA

TRANSGENDER TEENS SPEAK OUT

by Susan Kuklin



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CANDLEWICK PRESS
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A groundbreaking work of LGBT literature takes an honest look at the life, love, and struggles of transgender teens.

Author and photographer Susan Kuklin met and interviewed six transgender or gender-neutral young adults and used her considerable skills to represent them thoughtfully and respectfully before, during, and after their personal acknowledgment of gender preference. Portraits, family photographs, and candid images grace the pages, augmenting the narratives of the emotional and physical journey each youth has taken. Each honest discussion and disclosure, whether joyful or heartbreaking, is completely different from the other because of family dynamics, living situations, gender, and the transition these teens make in recognition of their true selves.

SUSAN KUKLIN is the award-winning author and photographer of more than thirty books for children and young adults that span social issues and culture. Her photographs have appeared in documentary films, *Time* Magazine, and the *New York Times*. Susan Kuklin lives in New York City.

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS FROM *BEYOND MAGENTA*

androgen: a male sex hormone, such as testosterone

androgynous: refers to a combination of masculine and feminine, often in appearance

down-low: a man who identifies as heterosexual but has sex with men

dysphoric: a state of unease or dissatisfaction with life

estrogen: a steroid hormone that is the primary female sex hormone; it promotes the development of female characteristics of the body

FTM (female to male): a person assigned female at birth but who identifies as male; a trans man

homophobic: having an extreme revulsion to homosexuals and homosexuality

hormone: a chemical released by a cell or a gland that affects cells in other parts of the body

intersex: a genetic condition in which a person is born with external genitalia and internal sex organs that are in between typically male and typically female

metrosexual: a male with a strong aesthetic sense who spends a great deal of effort on his appearance and lifestyle

mindfulness: a heightened consciousness or awareness of something or someone else

MTF (male to female): a person assigned male at birth but who identifies as female; a trans woman

neuron: a nerve cell that processes and transmits information by electrical and chemical signaling

pansexual: having a sexual preference that is not limited by gender identity or sexual orientation

placement: refers to residential treatment centers or facilities

pound: slang for a manly greeting

synapse: a place or junction between two cells where a nerve impulse is transmitted from one neuron to another

testes: components of the reproductive and endocrine systems in male-bodied people; their primary function is to produce sperm and androgens, mostly testosterone

testosterone: a steroid hormone that plays a key role in the development of male reproductive tissues, testes, and prostate, as well as secondary sexual characteristics such as increased muscle, bone mass, and body hair

transgender: a general term that refers to a person whose gender identity, expression, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth

transphobia: having an extreme revulsion to transgender people

ABOUT THE CALLEN-LORDE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

The Callen-Lorde Community Health Center is named after two beloved activists. Michael Callen (1955–1993) was a singer and composer. In 1982, he was diagnosed with AIDS. He became an activist, making people aware of the growing health crisis. Audre Lorde (1934–1992) was a poet and prose writer. Her book *The Cancer Journals*, published in 1980, narrated her experiences as a breast-cancer patient. She was also a librarian and educator who became a leader in the lesbian activists community.

In its mission statement, the clinic states that the “Callen-Lorde Community Health Center provides sensitive, quality health care and related services primarily to New York’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities—in all their diversity—regardless of ability to pay.”

The HOTT program (Health Outreach to Teens) is a primary-care medical facility for young people between the

ages of thirteen and twenty-four. It specializes in mental and medical health care, sexually transmitted infection screening, HIV care, and transgender care.

Amelie Davidson, one of the social worker-therapists at HOTT, deals with the mental health part of the clinic. Amelie says, “In terms of transgender care, our intention is to create a space where young people can come at any stage of their transition process, get correct information, and be cared for and feel safe.”

A person must be eighteen or older to be given hormone shots at Callen-Lorde. Although younger teen clients are able to work with HOTT therapists, they are referred to various hospitals for their hormone shots.

To learn more about the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, visit its website at <http://callen-lorde.org>.

ABOUT PROUD THEATER

In 1999, thirteen-year-old Sol Kelley-Jones picked up the phone and called Callen Harty, forty-three. Callen was an established actor and playwright at the Broom Street Theater in Madison, Wisconsin. Although they had heard about each other because they were both advocates for gay rights, they had never met. Sol, the daughter of lesbian parents, was interested in theater, politics, and activism. Sol asked Callen to help her start a theater group for gay and lesbian youth. Callen said yes.

The first year, only three gay teenagers signed on. (Currently there are thirty teen actors.) They had no funding. Churches around town gave them free rehearsal space. A few years into the program, some of the adults involved put up money to rent the main theater on the University of Wisconsin campus. They sold out the show and from that point on were able to pay their own way.

Proud Theater is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that is composed of LGBT youth, allies, and children of

LGBT parents. Proud Theater is often invited by churches, AIDS networks, senior centers, and schools to perform their plays. Sol describes their work as “a belief in the power of art to create change. The process of creating artwork out of youths’ experiences is radical, is transforming, and is healing. It is also healing to communities. It can have profound ripples.

“We consider ourselves an activist organization, an artistic organization, and also a youth-development organization. We’re developing leaders, stories, and strategies about how to use art to create new realities. We look at what we want the world to be like. I think theater is a magical place where you can experiment with what isn’t yet.”

To learn more about Proud Theater, visit its website at <http://www.proudtheater.org>.